

**SUMMARY OF THE  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JANUARY 18, 2000**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference at 1:30 p.m. on January 18, 2000. The meeting was lead by Chair Dr. Jim Pearson of the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. Dr. Pearson followed the agenda distributed previously to board members. Action items from this meeting are shown in Attachment A, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment B, and the list of participants is shown in Attachment C.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the board's meeting of December 14, 1999 were approved as modified:

**Policy on Conflicting Requirements**

The previously distributed draft policy for resolving inadvertent conflicts with the NELAC Standards was discussed. The need for such a policy has become apparent for effectively responding to discovered discrepancies or conflicts. General agreement was expressed that such a mechanism is necessary in order to ensure continued progress in implementation of the NELAC Standards by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)-approved accrediting authorities. Consensus on the general approach was expressed. Concern was expressed that the board not use the policy to modify the democratically-approved standards. It was agreed that the affected committees would be involved in applying this policy. Following this discussion, it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the board adopt the policy as written.

**Meeting with Office of Water (OW)**

Dr. Pearson and other attending board members summarized yesterday's meeting with Cynthia Dougherty of USEPA's OW regarding the Federal Register notice of December 1, 1999 (page 67450). Its regulations differ significantly from the NELAC Standards regarding proficiency testing (PT). Disappointment was expressed at the failure of USEPA and NELAC to work together to develop consistent approaches to laboratory issues. Several options for reconciling the NELAC standards and the USEPA regulations were discussed without resolution.

**Preview of NELAC Vi Proceedings**

Dr. Pearson polled committee chairs to preview issues for which they anticipated active discussion and encouraged the assigned board liaisons to attend the sessions.. He also reminded the chairs to follow the the session ground rules, which will be posted in each session, for facilitating and expediting discussion.

In addition, there were no action items.

Dr. Pearson reviewed outstanding action items in Attachment B. Dr. Charles Brokopp noted that he had drafted a letter related to the Air Toxics letter for Dr. Pearson's signature just prior to the Fifth NELAC Interim Meeting (NELAC Vi) and will E-mail a copy today.

## **AARB Charter Revision**

Ms. Jeanne Hankins reviewed the proposed charter for the Accrediting Authority Review Board, including all supplied suggestions. With minor editorial changes, it was the board's consensus that this document is ready for posting on the NELAC Website.

## **Summary of NELAP Accrediting Authority meetings**

It was noted that at NELAC Vi the board had discussed the most recent meeting of the 11 Accrediting Authorities (12/13/99). The next meeting is scheduled for 1/19/2000, so there is nothing new to discuss at this time.

## **Summary of meeting with Jewel Morris**

Ms. Hankins reported that she met with Ms. Jewel Morris, acting deputy director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) National Environmental Research Laboratory (NERL) on January 7, 2000 to discuss the plans of the USEPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) with respect to NELAC. Ms. Morris reiterated ORD's intention to continue support to NELAC with three staff assignments, but to terminate direct fiscal support to NELAC for policy-related reasons. Ms. Hankins also reported that the decision for settling NELAC within the reorganized USEPA structure is expected to be finalized within the next 30-45 days, upon which new staffing assignments will be announced. Board members discussed this information in the context of Mr. Henry Longest's statements at NELAC Vi and it was agreed that Ms. Hankins would seek resolution of the apparent discrepancies. When the Board noted that they have an open invitation to brief EPA's Deputy Administrator on NELAC issues, Ms. Carol Batterton noted that the Transition Committee will recommend a meeting as soon as possible (see below).

## **Presentation by Board at EPA's Annual QA Meeting**

Ms. Lisa Doucet reviewed the call for papers for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference on Managing Quality Systems for Environmental Programs, planned for April 3-7, 2000 in Albuquerque, NM. She suggested that the board may wish to present a paper on current NELAC issues to conference participants. Ms. Sylvia Labie agreed to make the necessary preparations and obtain help from board members on preparation of the talk.

## **Participation of Additional State Officials**

Dr. Kenneth Jackson reviewed his preparations for soliciting participation of states inactive in NELAC committee activities (an action item of 5/27/99). It was agreed that he would draft a suitable letter for mailing to encourage participation and update this mailing list. Board members agreed to follow up with personal calls in support of these letters.

## **Report of Transition Committee**

Dr. Brokopp and Ms. Batterton reviewed for the board the discussions of the Transition Committee in its January 13, 2000 meeting. They reported that membership changes have been completed, and the committee is responding to the board's charge to:

- review potential options and outcomes for NELAC, and to
- report their recommendations to the board no later than at the Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting.

Possible meetings with appropriate USEPA administrators were discussed, as were other options for informing USEPA of the value that stakeholders hold for NELAC. It was noted that a subcommittee of the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) has begun preparation of a review of NELAC issues. The board agreed that a meeting with Deputy Administrator Michael McCabe was in order.

### **Air Control Techniques Letter**

Following review of the December 15, 1999 letter, it was agreed that Field Activities chair, Mr. Dan Bivins, should follow standard NELAC policy and send an acknowledgment of this letter. In addition, the Board recommended that a follow-up contact by telephone would be appropriate to discuss the apparent misunderstandings.

### **Next Meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of this board is scheduled for February 10, 2000.

**NEW ACTION ITEMS  
NELAC BOARD OF TELECONFERENCE  
JANUARY 18, 2000**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Ms. Hankins will finalize the AARB charter and have it posted on the NELAC Website.	
2	Ms. Hankins will seek clarification on USEPA's NELAC staffing plans.	
3	Ms. Labie will contact Ms. Nancy Wentworth regarding presentation of a paper on current NELAC issues at the 19 <sup>th</sup> QA conference in Albuquerque, NM.	
4	Dr. Jackson will update a mailing list and finalize a letter to encourage participation in NELAC committees.  Board members will place follow-up calls to recipients as needed.	
5	Dr. Pearson will request a meeting with Deputy Administrator McCabe for NELAC board members.	
6	Mr. Bivins (chair of Field Activities committee) will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• send an acknowledgment of the Air Control Techniques letter, and</li><li>• follow up by telephone.</li></ul>	

**INCOMPLETE ACTION ITEMS FROM PAST MEETINGS**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
01/11/99	Committee Chairs are to prepare "Frequently Asked Questions" for posting on the NELAC Website. They are to submit these to Dr. Irene Ronning.	On-going
02/04/99	Ms. Hankins, Ms. Batterton, Ms. Sample and Dr. Hartwig will work on developing a training program for the Committee Chairs. Material was updated in response to comments. Ms. Sample and Ms. Labie will review.	Completed  On-going
9/23/99	Dr. Jackson will draft a policy for responding to future offers of NELAC-associated activities at national meetings.	On-going
10/28/99	Ms. Barbara Finazzo will coordinate contact of USEPA regional tribal coordinators to determine extent of existing tribal environmental programs, and interest in NELAC	On-going
12/2/99	Ms. Hankins will distribute recent Federal Partners' meeting minutes in which exemption of federal agencies as secondary accrediting authorities is addressed.	Ongoing

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JANUARY 18, 2000**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Telephone Numbers</b>
Dr. Jim Pearson Chair	VA Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services	Tel: 804-786-7905 Fax: 804-371-7973 E-mail: jpearson@dgs.state.va.us
Ms. Carol Batterton (invited)		Tel: 512-239-6300 Fax: 512-239-6390 E-mail: cbattert@tnrcc.state.tx.us
Dr. Charles Brokopp	UT Department of Health	Tel: 801-584-8406 Fax: 801-584-8486 E-mail: cbrokopp@doh.state.ut.us
Dr. Ron Cada	CO Department of Health	Tel: 303-692-3096 Fax: 303-344-9989 E-mail: ron.cada@state.co.us
Dr. Marcia Davies (invited)	USACE	Tel: 402-697-2555 Fax: 402-697-2595 E-mail: marcia.c.davies@usace.army.mil
Ms. Lisa Doucet	USEPA/ORD	Tel: 202-564-1416 Fax: 202-565-2441 E-mail: doucet.lisa@epa.gov
Ms. Barbara Finazzo (absent) Mr. Bob Runyon (invited)	USEPA, Region II	Tel: 732-321-6754 Fax: 732-321-4381 E-mail: finazzo.barbara@epamail.epa.gov
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